

23.03.21

5 Deputy C.S. Alves of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding issuance of sick notes (OQ.56/2023)

Will the Minister advise which hospital professionals can issue sick note certificates to patients and how, if at all, the issuance of certificates is monitored?

Deputy K. Wilson of St. Clement (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Yes, I can advise the Deputy that any registered medical practitioner can issue a sick note certificate to patients. Each script is numbered and sent to Customer and Local Services and that department is responsible for monitoring them, as they are responsible for issuing the sickness benefits that goes alongside the certificate. If the Deputy would like any further information on how this system operates, I would like to suggest perhaps maybe the Minister for Social Security and officers in her department would be the best place to go to.

3.5.1 Deputy C.S. Alves:

I assume that the registered medical practitioners does not include things like physiotherapists. So does the Minister believe that it is fair for those who have a longstanding injury, for example, such as a broken or severely-damaged limb and are being seen by these physiotherapists or similar professionals quite regularly in the hospital to manage treatment, to have to still go to their G.P. and pay a fee to then get a sick note for something that they know they will not recover from for a number of months?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, clearly in terms of the impact on the cost of accessing a certificate that is an issue that is related to the way in which we have discussed about costs of G.P. payments, but I would certainly be happy to look into this with my colleague, the Minister for Social Security.

3.5.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Apologies if the Minister has already answered this, I just missed it, but will sick notes be available from what one would call "specialist nurses" because there are a number of specialist nurses there who provide direct appointments and care for people with long-term conditions. So would the Minister say whether they can produce sick notes and, if not, would she look at doing that, because that will be a very effective way just to prevent the need to go and pay for a G.P. visit.

Deputy K. Wilson:

Yes, I would be happy to look at this again. I think, as we are starting to expand roles and responsibilities, that is something I think would be in the patient's interest and would be happy to discuss that with my colleagues in Social Security.